

AUSTRALIAN

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JUNE 2024

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BEE JOURNAL





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AUSTRALIAN BEE JOURNAL

Published since 1918 by the VAA - founded in 1892 -

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Cover photo: Rob Kerr - Olive assembled and wired her frame, added wax foundation and inspected it over the season

**Deadline for copy for the July 2024 journal is
10pm on Monday 1st of July 2024.**

The Australian Bee Journal seeks to publish contributions dealing with all aspects of beekeeping.
Statements expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of the VAA Inc or the editor.
Editor: Annette Engstrom

Contact the Editor for ads, photos, classifieds and article information

The Editor, Australian Bee Journal, P.O. Box 42 Newstead, VIC. 3462 Email: abjeditors@yahoo.com

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The Victorian Apiarists' Association Inc. (VAA)

The VAA was founded in 1892 and is the peak body for beekeeping in Victoria.

The Association advocates to federal, state, and local governments to protect and improve Victoria's honey resources and to ensure beekeepers' interests are safeguarded and promoted. We work to secure effective legislation and encourage scientific investigation and research in all aspects of beekeeping.

Our achievements include:

- Introducing the Victorian Apiary Code of Practice allowing bees to be kept in urban areas
- Contributing to the new Apiculture on Public Lands Policy through our involvement with the Buzz Committee
- Working with Plant Health Australia which contributed to the development of the Australian Biosecurity Code of Practice.

The VAA advocates for the beekeeping industry on behalf of all beekeepers in Victoria.

Management

The VAA Board meets a minimum of six times a year.

Members of the 2024 - 2025 Board

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Contact by email is preferred

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Ken Gell

Finance & Insurance

Ken Gell

Education

Don Whitehead

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Melbourne Show/fund raising

Judy Leggett

Constitution & Legal

Lindsay Callaway

Conference

Lindsay Callaway

Clubs & Affiliates

Phillip McPherson

Aust. Bee Journal/Website

John van Weeghel

Resources

Ken Gell

Services

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Commercial beekeeping

Phil McPherson

Recreational beekeeping

John van Weeghel

All beekeepers and interested groups are welcome to join the VAA.

Membership benefits include:

- The VAA's monthly magazine *Australian Bee Journal* (ABJ) including one free classified ad per year
- Access to the members' only section of the VAA website vicbeekeepers.com.au
- Discounts for beekeeping services and products, including insurance
- Borrowing rights to the extensive VAA library
- Voting rights at VAA regional group meetings and the annual VAA state conference
- Opportunity to participate in and contribute to VAA sub-committees
- Opportunity to meet and share ideas with other beekeepers at local group meetings, field days, shows and conferences
- Opportunity to contribute to advocacy to government and development of policy on beekeeping

Membership Rates

Up to 100 hives (1 vote): \$90

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How to join

Join online at

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to request a membership form.

www.vicbeekeepers.com.au

President's Annual Report

Over the last 12 months both members and the Association have faced some real challenges. Most beekeepers enjoyed a very good spring and early summer with good conditions and honey flows, but late summer and autumn were outright disappointing. Feeding became necessary once again for some, whilst banksia and spotted gum became saviors for those that have access to it.

On behalf of the Board, I thank and congratulate our Secretary and Treasurer, Kerrin Williams, for her 35 years of faithful service to the Association. She has seen many changes, dealt with many different issues and I am sure she could write a book with many good stories. It was planned for Kerrin to finish at this year's Annual Conference but unfortunately it appears that this will not be possible. We thank Kerrin for her contribution to the Association and wish her well.

Due to Kerrin's unfortunate health issues, the Board and Association functioned without her support for most of the year. This at times created challenges but was mainly overcome with the excellent support of volunteers and Board members. Discussions with Kerrin regarding her ongoing contracts led to her early decision not to seek renewal of her current contracts. This gave the Board time to review the positions and seek a suitable replacement.

After due process, Tino Corsetti was selected as the Administrative Officer service provider. Tino is well qualified, and the Board is looking forward to working with him to continue taking the Association forward.

Tino will be introduced to the members at the Annual Conference and members will have the opportunity to welcome him to the Association.

The Board has spent considerable time dealing with varroa issues. It was a difficult decision to accept the fact that it was no longer an option to continue with the eradication of varroa. Despite the excellent efforts of DPI, AHBIC and the many volunteers we had to accept the reality that the time had come to switch from eradication to management of varroa. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank all those that contributed to the eradication effort, including all the many Victorian beekeepers that travelled to NSW and assisted. Agriculture Victoria has engaged with the VAA to have practical safeguards in place to try and minimise the risk of varroa entering Victoria. The Board is very supportive of the AgVic initiative to set up the "Victorian Bee Biosecurity Working Group". This will give beekeepers a direct input to management of biosecurity issues and the work that the Varroa Development Officers and Bee Biosecurity Officer will do. As beekeepers we are very fortunate that training for varroa management is financially supported by Governments and bee pollination reliant industries. Even though it has taken considerable time to get to this point, the first training should be available very soon.

It is 12 months since printed copies of the Australian Bee Journal were made available. The response we received was very positive as not all members can ac-

(Continued on page 6)



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President's Annual Report

(Continued from page 5)

cess the electronic copy of the journal. Requests for printed copies have increased but are still below 30% of the membership. It is great to see the continued support of advertisers, please consider them when you can.

An Association rebrand will be presented at the Annual Conference. Over recent years several fundamental issues have been dealt with, like the Constitution, By-Laws and finances. This has put the Association in a strong position to take the next step, getting out the message, who and what we are. The rebrand presentation will include the unveiling of a new logo but the rebrand is much more than a new logo. It is a package promoting the Association as the home of Victorian beekeepers. No matter where you fit into the beekeeping family the Victorian Apiarists' Association will welcome you and support you! This is one more step towards building the VAA into a stronger Victorian peak beekeeping Association.

On March 9 the Association held its first Recreational Conference. With an excellent program the conference was sold out with members attending from across the state. A decision has been made to have another Recreational Conference in 2025. Affiliated groups were invited to be part of this event and it was pleasing to see that many participated by attending and assisting in organising the event. Over the next 12 months we will not only continue with our regular activities we will see new initiatives, please stay tuned.

The Association has a strong network of people and businesses that contribute to the success of it. On behalf of the Board thank you to each and everyone.

A special thank you to Kerrin Williams, Tino Corsetti, Annette Engstrom, John Kennedy, sponsors, advertisers, members and the many wonderful volunteers.

John van Weeghel
President

Swarm Control Books

By John Kennedy

It seems appropriate that with the northern hemisphere fast reaching warmer weather with the arrival of their spring and the swarming season for bees, new titles on Swarm Control should emerge.

Northern Bee Books (www.northernbeebooks.co.uk) which rightly claims to be the world's largest producer of bee books in the English language, is not surprisingly at the forefront, with two new releases at the date of writing. Here's the first -

SWARM CONTROL EXPLAINED - IN 38 PAGES

This book is simply titled *Swarm Control* and is by Richard Ball.

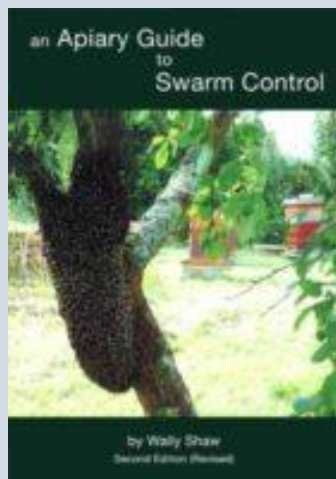
It seems to be a second edition with the original first published in 2022.

Mr Ball is a beekeeper in Devon, a former national Bee Inspector for England & Wales, and retired from the UK's National Bee Unit as an extension officer in 2011.

He describes all the well known swarm remedies from Demaree to Pagden, Heddon, Snelgrove and Artificial Swarming.

At eight pounds 95 shillings plus conversion and postage to here for 38 well written pages it seems a worthwhile investment.

It is worth noting that it carries the endorsement of the USA's recently deceased Kim Flottum, who says author Ball "expertly and succinctly details his experience in managing the honey bee's natural swarm impulse".



Next to emerge is **AN APIARY GUIDE TO SWARM CONTROL** from the pen of Wally Shaw, another 30 page paperback with a retail price given of 12 pounds 95 in sterling plus local currency conversion and postage

The publishers note says "this booklet is primarily about practical swarm control, what to do when you are out there at the hive-side faced with making a decision about what to do to control the swarming impulse.

Therein "are a series of diagrams that can be used as a guide to management and can even be kept at the apiary, for reference if required.

They note that "the accompanying text has been kept to a minimum with just enough to explain the manipulations involved and their function".

Mr Shaw is a well-known UK educator and beekeeper, and this work is an updated edition of what has been one of the best-selling titles, released eight years after the first edition was published.

They say it incorporates what has been learned by the author and others about swarm control over this intervening period.

VAA Bendigo Branch Annual Report

Bendigo Branch of the VAA has had an active year with interesting monthly meetings. Our guest speakers covered so many interesting topics from queen bee rearing to all aspects of bee husbandry.

Our Annual Beekeeping Field Day, always held on the second Sunday in October proved to be a stimulating day of learning: listening to guest speakers, visiting trade stall holders, and various open hive, beginners and other presentations. We have a very enthusiastic membership who partake in the many activities we hold, which make for very friendly and enjoyable occasions.

Our membership consists of all levels of beekeepers from absolute beginners to the most experienced. We are very fortunate within our group to have wonderful mentors with so much beekeeping experiences who are always more than happy to share their tips and experience as well as learning from newer beekeepers.

I really enjoy it that so many choose to stay on after meetings to chat and catch up with each other. Our barbeques for activities and interaction are so well attended, especially our Annual Autumn Pack Down Day. I have enjoyed the last year together with the great camaraderie within our club. We invite, welcome and encourage new members regardless of levels of experience to attend meetings.

Elections held at the April AGM for Bendigo Branch VAA resulted in the appointment of the following members to our Board of Management Executive Committee for the April 2024-April 2025 year: Chair: Jamie Trimby, Deputy Chair: Max Maunder, Secretary: Peta Dawe, Assistant Secretary: Robert McDonald, Treasurer: Carol Maunder, Assistant Treasurer: Scott Wright, Resources Rep: Max Maunder, VAA Board Rep (*nominated in February*): Lindsay Callaway. Members: Committee: Margie Gallagher, Stafford Kelly, Michael St. Clair, Doug Barrett and Angelique Perry.

Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month, except January, with Business meetings held bi-monthly as required. The venue for all meetings is the Lakeside Hotel, Napier Street, Bendigo commencing with a meal (optional) at 6.00 p.m., followed by the meeting at 7.00 p.m. Registration is essential. Please contact the secretary no later than 9.00 p.m. on the Monday prior to meetings if you are intending to come, indicating if you intend to come for the meal or otherwise.

For additional information please refer to the VAA website

Margie Gallagher

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Sunraysia Branch Annual Report

Members enjoyed a pretty good season after the Mallee experienced above average rains over the last couple of years, with most sites stocked with bees over the Spring /Summer period.

The upcoming season does not appear to be as rosy as most mallee species flowering cycle was last season, with a bit of a lull this coming season.

There was no sign of looper caterpillars this year after their devastation of thousands of hectares the previous summer. Most trees have recovered but it certainly took a toll on the budding cycle. They may get out of sync with unaffected areas, time will tell.

Our last meeting held at the Red Cliffs Club was addressed by Trevor Monson on his recent trip to America on Varroa resistant Queen traits and some left field treatments which indicates the wild west of beekeeping is still alive and well in some corners of the USA. Varroa resistant bees would be an excellent tool

to have in the Australian beekeeping toolbox. Naomi Forbes-Wilson gave us a brief rundown on Nuplus products, to be continued next meeting. We were delighted to have Chris Dawson come up from Bendigo to demonstrate his U-Beaut motorized hive barrow. It created a lot of interest and a few of us are going to borrow Trevor Monson's purchase and give it a road test.

Our AGM is coming up at the end of June, so we hope to get some new blood on the executive to drive the Branch forward.

In conclusion I'd like to thank the VAA Board for all their hard work, particularly since the start of Covid and now Varroa, and wish all members a successful conference.

Jon Williams
(Sunraysia Branch President)

Email to VAA Members 28th May 2024

Please note the following change of postal address for the VAA.

Effective May 2024 our new mailing address is:

Victorian Apiarists' Association, PO Box 721 Woodend, VIC 3442

This address has also been updated on our website in the footer section. The following contact information for the VAA remains the same: **Email:** vaa@vicbeekeepers.com.au **Phone:** 0498 461 460

Our new Administration Officer and Secretary is Tino Corsetti. He can be reached directly at the phone number above or the following email address: **Email:** tino.corsetti@vicbeekeepers.com.au

Sincerely,

The VAA Board, Victorian Apiarists Association

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Melbourne Section Annual Report To Conference

The Melbourne Section has a long history which includes many traditional activities and events that have served beekeepers well over the years. The interruption of COVID and the departure of some very active Melbourne Section people is still being felt. Post-COVID rebuild seems to have been hard on many clubs and the Melbourne Section is no exception.

Attendance is down at our monthly meetings of late. This may reflect the awkward fall of monthly meetings in relation to the calendar and events. Our "last Thursday of the month" may have tricked those who thought that February only had four Thursdays, because in this leap year there are five (and we look forward to better managing this situation in 28 years time). We were on the eve of Good Friday or on the ANZAC public holiday itself and then battled even more months with five Thursdays!

Events organised by the MS have been well supported however this is not translating into more VAA memberships and attendance at meetings. Some events are difficult without a certain level of participation. In particular, the Auction Night needs a sufficient range of people who are in transition, whether to more complex beekeeping or less complex beekeeping, if we are to have enough people who wish to dispose or acquire beekeeping equipment.

Important knowledge and development of skills have been offered by the Melbourne Section this year. Andrew Wootton's Living with Varroa was an excellent

basis for feeling more in control, for feeling like it is not all doom and gloom for bees and beekeepers. A practical workshop on queen grafting, also by Andrew, provided the opportunity for beekeepers to move beyond "the taking of honey at the end of the season".

We have worked with beekeeping equipment suppliers and specialists from other fields to make a more rounded experience for our beekeepers. Very experienced beekeepers and hive product specialists have delivered, with stories and examples of success and failure, so much knowledge about the seasonal items of swarming, summer beekeeping and pack down. Stories, props and samples of success and failures have been provided with the thought processes, observational techniques and pros and cons of solutions that enable attendees to go home and be better at what they do.

Our Christmas party and a social / games night focused on beekeepers being a community and knowing someone as more than a number of hives or a preference for particular equipment. The honey competition drew a decent audience and it was great to see plenty of entries, even if the odds on favourite won again.

This year's monthly meetings have had excellent suppers and the library and librarian open for loans and returns (respectively!?). The VAA Library, on show at each monthly meeting, proves to be a great source of beekeeping information for those who avail themselves of this extensive resource.

(Continued on page 10)

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Melbourne Section Annual Report To Conference, cont'd

(Continued from page 9)

Beeginners' Corner with segments on "what's in flower", "what's that disease" and "what's your problem?" has spread knowhow to new as well as very experienced beekeepers. The round-up of the latest news, particularly varroa, has kept us up to date with news around the state and country. The raffle and door prize often go to hard workers and the most deserving and sometimes even to committee members.

Melbourne Section continues to manage the hives at Collingwood Children's Farm (CCF). The Farm Apiary enabled education such as the queen grafting course and workshops for making and maintaining equipment where the well-equipped shed came into its own. About half the hives were requeened with purchased queens and the other half will be requeened from the best hives in the coming Spring.

Over the last season, a Young Beekeeper program was held on the apiary Open Days (second and fourth Sundays of each month) with the assistance of a couple of young beekeepers who had participated in the previous year's program. A CCF professional development day held at the apiary was well received by the farm

staff able to attend and is likely to be offered again. Attendance by members of the public on our open days at the apiary is reduced owing to civil works further down the bike path blocking the thoroughfare and discouraging passing traffic. The apiary produced about 20 kgs of honey this year which was disappointing for pretty much everyone involved.

Farm management are active in responding to day to day issues at the apiary, but the bigger issue of how the VAA MS and the Farm are going to work together for the next few years is taking more time and effort than we want.

2023-24 saw some new faces on Committee with strong opinions and contributions to match. We thank those who take on the committee positions for their desire to make the Melbourne Section better for all beekeepers. A big thank you to all the beekeepers who contribute to the Melbourne Section with time, ideas, attendance and behind the scenes work.

The Melbourne Section continues to survive and, with the possibility of more new faces duly elected at our July AGM, we will aim to thrive.

Mike Love, Melbourne Section Chair

on behalf of the VAA Melbourne Section committee



Left: Young beekeepers lighting smokers and enjoying it.

Below: End of season for the young beekeepers at the Collingwood Children's Farm Apiary. The group includes: Luca, Orlando, Arlo, Olive, Georgia, Leo, and Felix.
Photos Rob Kerr



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A LOCAL BEE BOOK IN THE WINGS

By John Kennedy

Scheduled for release around October next is a new local book carrying the title *Urban Beekeeping – the City As A Hive*.

It comes from ACT engineer Cormac Farrell, who also carries the impressive title of Head Beekeeper, Australian Parliament House.

Judged as an Information Manual the work explores how we can adapt urban spaces to create a more sustainable future for bees and ourselves. Cormac Farrell notes that “urban beekeeping has become a booming pastime in cities throughout the world. But why fit bees into our cities when we could reshape our cities to fit them”.

The guide is a practical book about establishing a thriving urban hive.

Topics range from understanding different bee species to selecting the right one for your space to setting up an apiary and providing the right plantings for bees - the book apparently covers a wealth of locations from home and community gardens to rooftop apiaries.

The publisher and price are as yet not disclosed, but are sure to arrive as the release date nears.



Big Grey resting under the flight path
Photo: Rob Kerr

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VAA Inc Library Trust Annual Report

It was back in January 1978 when the Victorian Apirarists' Association Inc. (VAA) Library first began to officially function. Its main role, apart from operating as a library was to be responsible for the care and maintenance of historical and recent publications of books, pamphlets and associated documents. Over the years since beginning, it has developed into quite an expansive collection covering information on all topics in some way related to beekeeping.

Currently, it has 727 books, 50 DVDs and videos. Some of these items, can be examined at the VAA Melbourne Section monthly meetings. These are held at the Surrey Hills Church of Christ premises on the last Thursday of the month (except December). The VAA Bendigo Branch also has some of the collection for the benefit of its attendees. The rest of the collection, due to space limitations, are held offsite. To borrow a book people must be financial members of the VAA.

The VAA Library Trust is responsible for operating and upkeep of the library. Trust Members for the past 12 months were Ivan Barber (Treasurer), Russell Goodman, (Secretary), Bruce Diggles (Chairperson and Librarian), Michael Love, (Deputy Chairperson), William Orange, (Librarian Assistant).

Sixty-seven rare and historical books are kept in safe conditions at Beechworth Honey's Museum. The books continue to be owned by the VAA Library Trust and can be viewed by people who contact Beechworth Honey direct and make an appointment to view them on site. They cannot be borrowed. The Trust appreciates the cooperation of Beechworth Honey.

Recently, the Trust was donated a trolley by the VAA for the purpose of transporting library materials to and from the Bendigo Branch. Being on wheels, it is much easier on the librarian's back. The Trust would like to take this opportunity to thank the VAA for this

kind gesture. It was duly loaded with library items and soon an exchange of Library items will take place. This is a real plus for a greater number of VAA members.

The balance of funds as at 31 March 2024 was \$2045.35. For insurance purposes, books, booklets and bound volumes, video and DVDs are valued at \$19,850. Cabinets and book holders are valued at \$1,300.00.

The Trust encourages VAA members to attend the Melbourne and Bendigo Branch meetings, as these are the meetings where they can browse and borrow books. When coming to Melbourne Section meetings, borrowing starts at approximately 7:15pm. The current loan fee for books is 50 cents per month for each item, payable in advance.

Of late there has been a small increase of interest in the library, an encouraging sign. However, for most of the year, only a small number of books have been borrowed. If you have any overdue books at home, please return them to the librarian. Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated.

The Trust is appreciative of donations of books which will add to the library. As you no doubt already know, bee keeping is a vast topic and knowledge about bees and related subjects is expanding all the time. The library needs to develop and grow as knowledge on bee behaviour increases. Due to severe space restraints the Trust is unable to accept any more donations of bee-keeping journals.

As always, I would like to express my appreciation to members of the Trust for their assistance to me in making the library a valuable asset and part of the VAA.

For and on behalf of the VAA Library Trust.

Bruce Diggles.
Chair

2023 Royal Melbourne Show Report To Conference

The VAA had another successful year at the show as far as interacting with public about all things bees and providing education on bees, honey and other products from the hive. Surprisingly to me, Banksia was a favourite honey, although we had a few inquiring after their favourite Orange blossom as well. Honey varieties we featured this year under the VAA label were Grey Box, Red Gum, Red Stringy bark and Banksia. Another positive of the show is the opportunity for interaction between our members who volunteer and the chance to meet different members that you might only get to see once a year at the show.

Financially however, it is getting more difficult to turn a profit at the show. Our stand costs were almost \$16,000 meaning that we have to sell well over \$2000 per day at the show to just break even. We have met with show management regarding having three other bee related sellers in the same pavilion and urged them to reconsider the location of all of these providers. The show seems largely about commercial interests these days rather than the agricultural experience that it once

provided. We are hoping to get some favourable outcomes and are awaiting our offer to commit to exhibiting at the show this year. We are hopeful that our argument that our stand is largely educational and not commercial will assist us to have a more favourable financial outcome in future.

The bee cage is a favourite of the public at the show (although we did have some concern for the welfare of the bees in the cage) and we thank the Melbourne Section and members who volunteer at the Collingwood Children's farm for providing the hives for the bee cage and frames for the observation frames. This is a big undertaking with frames and hives being swapped out many times during the show to ensure the least amount of stress on the bees involved. The interaction with the public and the interest that this generates however is a real winner for our stand. One of our competitors thought it was so good they took video of the demonstration to upload to their social media accounts, passing it off as their display at the show!

(Continued on page 14)

2023 Royal Melbourne Show Report To Conference, cont'd

(Continued from page 13)

We also have a loyal group of suppliers providing product for us to sell at the show, under favourable conditions, assisting the Association to make some profit. It was a difficult decision to cut mead from our products this year but unfortunately an over tripling of the cost for a liquor licence and the onerous requirements for tasting/selling alcohol left us feeling like we had no choice. Hopefully, we can see it back in some capacity. We are always on the lookout for new products from the hive to showcase at the show so if you have a product you would like us to consider, please be in touch.

A big thank you must go to Carol Maunder for undertaking the volunteer roster for the show, to Mike Love assisting me as a volunteer manager at the 11 days of the show, to Gell's honey for storing show equipment and setup and pack up duties. Also to all our wonderful volunteers that help with all things at the show, from setup to pack up, to engaging and educating the public, to assisting with honey tasting, cleaning up from

said honey tastings, labelling products, packing bundle bags and the list goes on. Please look out for emails and updates in the journal if you are interested in volunteering at the show, September 26th to October 6th for this coming year.

Another thank you to our sponsors Beechworth Honey and Bega Honey who provided product free of charge to enable us to stock our Bundle bag. This contributes greatly to our ability to make a profit at the show and we look forward to continuing this collaboration.

So, although not without its challenges, the Melbourne Royal Show continues to provide a platform to interact with the public and educate about the importance of bees and our Association. Hopefully we can continue and have a more successful show this year.

Judy Leggett

VAA Co-ordinator Melbourne Royal Show

0423 464 800

aandjleggett@bigpond.com

AgriFutures

Latest podcast episode

In the fifth episode of our Expert Interview series on varroa management, we talk to Elizabeth Walsh, from the Honey Bee Lab at the US Department of Agriculture. Elizabeth is a research entomologist with expertise in honey bee breeding, genetics and physiology. Elizabeth unpacks integrated pest management for varroa with Bianca Giggins, Varroa Coordinator at the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council.

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New Varroa Mite Book Released

By John Kennedy

Any beekeeper seeking a serious book for information on the mite will find there are few published resources available.

There is a New Zealand edition on their experiences, which has been published in multiple updates as the story there has evolved, but that is about it.

This makes the recent launch of a work titled *The Honey Bee Solution to Varroa* – subtitled *A Practical Guide for Beekeepers* - published by Northern Bee Books (www.northernbeebooks.co.uk) a timely arrival.

A first edition paperback of 140 pages and with a sale price of 20 pounds sterling (plus \$A conversion and postal delivery) it is from Steve Riley, an experienced beekeeper and currently chair of the Westerham Beekeeper's Association in the south east of UK. It also has a forward from a leading bee scientist Emeritus Professor Stephen Martin.

Riley makes the case for how we beekeepers can work with our honey bees to deploy their natural traits to resist varroa destructor.

He charts a six year journey under guidance from, and close collaboration with, leading scientists in the field of researching and experimenting, to fine tuning management strategies to achieve success and varroa-resistant bees. The aim of the book is to learn from mistakes and learn lessons from the pioneering work.

It has 15 quite short chapters with extensive reference sources, and a recommended reading list and ap-

pendix that charts a stepping stone toward achieving the goal of varroa resistance.

It notes that simple monitoring of varroa using open mesh floors (OMF) and bottom boards is advised since we need to study more than just mites. There is a quote “when you use a varroa board under an OMF you have a research lab generating a wealth of information”.

The book also addresses the history of treatment-free beekeeping including how South African beekeepers have never treated for varroa.

Colonies were lost after varroa arrived in that country but in five to eight years the colonies that survived built up and developed a resistance that enabled them to flourish.

Riley portends that several groups of UK beekeepers that have been working together for some years have already achieved this goal. He comments that “mainstream beekeeping does not currently teach about selection for varroa resistance.

“As a result, the honey bee and varroa relationship is moving further out of balance.

“By using miticides beekeepers are unwittingly removing the natural selection pressure on their honey bees to deal with the mites.

“The result is a cycle of breeding from bees which are susceptible to varroa”.

In an area where serious published books on the mite are so hard to find Riley's work looks like quite essential information, even if we do not follow the advice he provides.





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AgriFutures Publication

Project snapshot: Honey bee probiotic to combat glyphosate and oxytetracycline hydrochloride exposure

6 pages

Published: 29 May 2024

Author: Casey Forster

Agrochemicals used in Australian agriculture have the potential to harm honey bees, which puts at risk the ability of beekeepers to produce honey and provide pollination services, and thus industry sustainability. Specifically, the antibiotic oxytetracycline hydrochloride (OTC), used to treat European foulbrood, and the herbicide glyphosate can impact honey bee health, behaviours and gut microbiome.

As the gut microbiome is linked to overall animal health and behaviours, the effects of OTC and glyphosate on honey bees may stem from their effects on the gut. Probiotic supplementary feeding to restore the gut microbiome after exposure to agrochemicals could relieve their negative effects.

This project investigated the impact of glyphosate and OTC exposure on honey bee survival, cognition and gut microbiome, and whether probiotic supplementary feeding alleviates negative effects. Although glyphosate, OTC and probiotic supplementary feeding were found to alter the gut microbiome of honey bees, they did not impact honey bee survival

or cognition. This finding meant we were unable to determine the potential survival or cognitive performance benefits of probiotic supplementary feeding against these specific agrochemical stressors.

However, we now better understand the impact of the two agrochemicals on honey bees, including their limits, and how probiotic supplementary feeding alters the gut microbiome; probiotics remain a potential strategy to support honey bee health. With further investigation, probiotic supplementary feeding could be ecologically and economically valuable for honey bee care and management.

Download the report from [here](#)



*My solar wax melter had a really strong day!
Photo: Rob Kerr*



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AHBIC Industry Update 60

T2M

30th May 2024

Varroa Mite Management Workshops

The National T2M will be hosting two separate train the trainer events to develop the capacity of contracted trainers to deliver varroa management education. In the coming months, several beekeeper workshop events will be added to the calendar as well as rolling out further workshops for the state of NSW. All other states will have dates and details released in the coming weeks as the education activity welcomes a coordinator to the team by mid June. Successful T2M Program Varroa Management Workshop hosted in Wagga Wagga 22 May 2024 for a commercial cohort, in conjunction with the NSW Apirarists Association annual conference event.

Across Australia, beekeepers are encouraged to consider attending a National Varroa Mite Management Program workshop. Find out more on the following website: <https://ticketing.humanitix.com/tours/varroa-management-training>

Webinar 2

National Transition to Management 28 May 2024

Another successful online Webinar was hosted by AHBIC and the National T2M Program team on 28 May, delivering an engaging list of presentations and a live Q&A. Jump in and watch the recording if you missed it, there were some great details across Integrated Pest Management and Chemical registration processes in Australia that would appeal to all beekeepers who are learning to live with varroa.

- T2M Overview: Tamara Prentice, National T2M Coordinator NSW DPI
- Integrated Pest Management: Elizabeth Frost, Technical Specialist Bees, NSW DPI
- Chemicals and Varroa: Danny Le Feuvre, CEO AHBIC

Varroa Development Officer Updates New South Wales

It is exciting to note that the NSW Varroa Development Officers (VDO's) and their coordinator have been very busy reaching several varroa affected beekeepers across the regions in NSW. If you, your club or branch are keen to get more details and practical advice about varroa, maybe you have been to a workshop and are after some more techniques or knowledge, reach out to the VDO's to organise an engagement activity. 1800 084 881 or email varroa.response@emergency.dpi.nsw.gov.au

Victoria

Two full time VDO's and 10 casual VDO's will be coming soon to beekeepers in Victoria under the National Transition to Management Program. AHBIC sees their initial roles as vital education, sharing knowledge on monitoring and practical preventative measures and we encourage beekeepers in Victoria to consider ways in which the VIC VDO's can be of ser-

vice to your local club and branch in the coming months.

Tasmania

The Tasmanian Government is advertising for two Varroa Development Officers under the National T2M Program. These roles are responsible for engaging with commercial and recreational beekeepers in Tasmania regarding hive health monitoring and all areas of Varroa mite management through formal and informal training. View the details and apply here: Tasmanian Government Jobs (pageuppeople.com) <https://careers.pageuppeople.com/759/cw/en/job/518158/varroa-development-officer-709795-709796>

AHBIC Varroa Treatment Table

The treatment table as of 28th May 2024. The table has recently been colour coded to represent chemicals and their "Mode of Action", so have a look to refresh your memory. The table is a guide only in understanding the key drivers of decision making surrounding Varroa management when thresholds are met and beekeepers are looking to understand the legal chemicals currently available.

AHBIC Varroa Treatment Table
<https://honeybee.org.au/ahbic-varroa-treatment-table/>

You can reach out to AHBIC via:
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Bianca Giggins
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Randy Oliver's Golden West Queens

By John Kennedy

Notable US beekeeper Randy Oliver based in California, has been with his sons Eric and Ian under the name of Golden West Queens, involved in almond pollination and to sell a thousand nucs each spring without using any synthetic mite treatments since 2001.

While monitoring their hives in 2017 they discovered a colony that maintained mite counts of zero without treatments.

This caused them to embark on what they describe "as a serious selective breeding program with daughters grafted from that Queen Zero".

Each year they now split and requeen all their hives, solely with daughters that headed the previous seasons most mite resistant colonies.

They now say, "starting with only a single resistant colony out of 1500 over the years we have slowly increased the percentage of hives that have complete or partial mite resistance".

"In the first year heritability was frustratingly low but by the 2023 season in some yards our colonies maintained mite infestation rates below two percent over the entire course of the season, right in the middle of crowded apiaries with some mite drift – without the application of any miticides".

The Oliver's say we don't select for "looks" and use their queen's variation in color pattern as an indicator that they are maintaining enough diversity in their stock, but they do select for performance.

They add we "only breed from queens whose colonies are very gentle, exhibit above average honey production and are proved for almond pollination".

Randy Oliver has now joined with Olivarez Honey Bees to produce production queens that are produced in an isolated mating yard enabling Olivarez to control their drone pool.

"This is a win-win for both as it allows OHB mated Oliver Queens to be mated to Oliver drones while allowing the Oliver's to focus upon their successful selective breeding program which involves thousands of mite washes throughout the year.

Their website notes "keep in mind there is no such thing as a mite-resistant queen – it's the workers produced by the queens and drones that confer resistance".

The Oliver's want to make it clear that they have not yet fixed the genetics for mite resistance.

"But it looks like you have got a 50% chance that our queens might produce resistant colonies – a figure we expect to improve every year," adding "keep in mind that even our mite resistant colonies require fewer treatments".

Randy Oliver's Golden West Queens are currently available in the USA for \$US41.

Regular updates to Randy's work are a must read for beekeepers and are available at ScientificBeekeeping.com.



Rob Kerr: Liquid gold even golder in the sunlight



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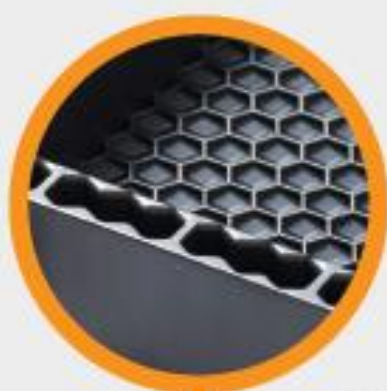
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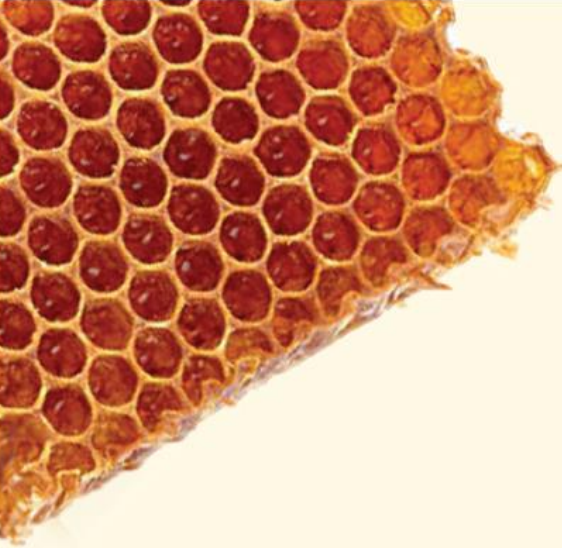
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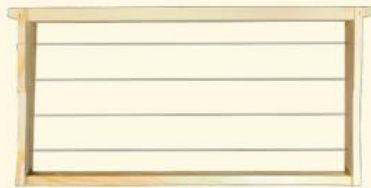
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As Varroa Spreads...You Can Help Our Bees

First Published **The Conversation**: February 27, 2024

THE CONVERSATION

As Varroa spreads, now is the time to fight for Australia's honey bees – and you can help

By Alexander Mikheyev

Professor

ANU Bee lab,

Australian National University

A tiny foe threatens Australian beekeepers' livelihood, our food supply and the national economy. First detected in New South Wales in 2022, the Varroa mite is now established in Australia.

The parasitic mite, which feeds on honey bees and transmits bee viruses, has since spread across New South Wales.

It is expected to kill virtually all unmanaged honey bees living in the bush (also known as "feral" honey bees), which provide ecosystem-wide pollination. Honey bees managed by beekeepers will survive only with constant and costly use of pesticides.

As the last holdout against Varroa, Australia has a key advantage – we can still take action that was impossible elsewhere. We know Varroa-resistant bees would be the silver bullet. Despite decades of research, no fully resistant strains exist, largely because the genetics of Varroa resistance are complex and remain poorly understood.

A recently released national management plan places a heavy focus on beekeeper education, aiming to transition the industry to self-management in two years. This leaves research gaps that need to be urgently filled – and we can all work together to help tackle these.

Unlocking the genetic key to resistance

Without human intervention, Varroa kills around 95% of the honey bees it infects, but the survivors can evolve resistance. However, losing almost all bees would decimate Australia's agriculture.

Our feral honey bees will have no choice but to evolve resistance, as they have in other countries. However, feral honey bees are not suited for beekeeping as they are too aggressive, don't stay with the hive and don't produce enough honey.

In principle, we could breed for a combination of feral resistance and domestic docility. But figuring out the genetics of how feral bees resist Varroa has been a challenge. As most bees exposed to the parasite will die, the survivors will be genetically different.

Some of these differences will be due to natural selection, but most will be due to chance. Identifying the genes responsible for resistance in this scenario is difficult. The best way to find them is to measure genetic changes before and after Varroa infestation. But to do that, we need bee populations largely unaffected by

Varroa.

This is where our unique Australian opportunity comes in. We have a small and vanishing window to collect bees before the inevitable rapid spread of the mites, and the mass die-offs, occur.

We are collecting information... and bees

My lab at the Australian National University's Research School of Biology has started collecting data on feral bee populations around New South Wales to identify pre-Varroa genetic diversity.

We will also monitor changes in bee population size and the spread of viruses and mites.

The most efficient way to collect bees is to go to a local clearing, such as a sports oval surrounded by forest. Unbeknownst to the cricket players, honey bee males (that is, drones) congregate at these sites by the thousands on sunny afternoons looking for mates.

You can lure them with some queen pheromone suspended from a balloon, and sweep them up with a butterfly net. Bee drones have no stinger and only come out for a couple of hours when the weather is fantastic, making collecting them literally a walk in the park, suitable for nature enthusiasts of all ages.

Anyone can help

You can help this effort by collecting some drones in your local area – this would save us time and carbon emissions from driving all over the country. We will provide pheromone lures, instructions, and materials for sending the bees back via mail. By sacrificing a few drones for the research now, we might save millions of bees in the future.

If you can spare just a couple of summer afternoons, this would give two timepoints at your location, and we can monitor any changes as the Varroa infestation progresses. More information can be [found on our website](#).

Apart from our project, there are also other urgent research questions. For example, how will native forests respond to the loss of their dominant pollinators? Will honey bee viruses spread into other insects?

Work on these and other projects also requires pre-Varroa data. Unfortunately, Varroa falls through our research infrastructure net. Most of Australia's agricultural funding is industry-led, however, the beekeeping industry is small and lacks the resources to tackle Varroa research while also reeling from its impacts.

Other industries that rely on honey bees for pollination, including most fruit, nut and berry growers, have diverse research needs and are one step removed from the actual problem.

Together, we can take action to save Australia's honey bees and assure security for our key pollinators.

Read the original article [here](https://theconversation.com/as-varroa-spreads-now-is-the-time-to-fight-for-australias-honey-bees-and-you-can-help-223204) <https://theconversation.com/as-varroa-spreads-now-is-the-time-to-fight-for-australias-honey-bees-and-you-can-help-223204>

The Australian Bee Journal would love some of your original bee related photos to use in the journal. Please send as a jpeg image to abjeditors@yahoo.com



GA Jackson

New Book On Splits And Varroa

By John Kennedy

All manner of options and solutions are being advanced, especially on the web, for the management of varroa.

Even a reprint of a book that was first published in 2016 has arrived.

It carries the title of *Splits & Varroa* with the subtitle of *An Introduction to Splitting Hives as Part of Varroa Control*.

It is authored by William Hesbach, a beekeeper and honey producer who operates the Wild Dance Apiary in Cheshire, Connecticut in the USA.

He is well credentialed academically and holds the coveted Master Beekeeper title, and chairs as well his local Backyard Beekeepers Association.

He is also a contributing writer to the leading Bee Culture journal title.

This is a paperback book of only 42 pages and Northern Bee Books the publisher and source (www.northernbeebooks.co.uk) lists it for sale for nine pounds 95 pence plus \$A conversion and shipment by post.

Author Hesbach notes that “regardless of style and the debates concerning results, one single fact remains – beekeepers must manage varroa to levels below damaging thresholds or colonies die.

“To meet those thresholds, some beekeepers looking

for less toxic alternatives, are beginning the judicious use of softer chemicals like organic acids and compounds from thyme and hops.

“Then here are growing numbers of beekeepers looking further for even less toxic and more natural alternatives.

Mr Hesbach says that “one dependable way to accomplish a measure of control without chemicals is to manipulate the reproductive events in the varroa lifecycle.

What follows in this booklet is an introduction to achieving those manipulations using different techniques of splitting a colony.

So he discusses Splits & Varroa including how splits work, Walkaway Splits during the storm season and Ripe Queen Cells or how do you know when a queen cell is ripe, as well as Virgins and the Parent Colony Queen.

Included are what seem to be two useful Appendices.

At a time when varroa mite management is an almost unknown and yet to be experienced problem for all local beekeepers, this quite inexpensive manual or a how to do it guide seems a worthwhile investment.

It comes out as a useful resource where almost any new varroa mite management information has a potential value.

Deadline for copy for the July journal is 10pm on Monday 1st of July 2024



Photo: Lindsay Callaway

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Dividing Creek Honey Farm

A GREAT STORY OF ACHIEVEMENT

By John Kennedy

If there was an Award for Commercial Beekeeper of the Year and/or the Best New Start Up Beekeeping Business, then I contend that Matt Petersen would rank highly for acknowledgement, having started out as a commercial only in 2019.

Matt founded and runs Dividing Creek Honey Farm, located a short distance south of Fish Creek in Victoria's South Gippsland.

In short, it's just off the Meenyan to Wilson Promontory Road, which in a calendar year attracts around 1,000,000 vehicle movements, mainly visitors and tourists on the road to the acclaimed 'Prom'.

But more about that later.

Matt Petersen has a great beekeeping story - he told me he had his first hive at age eight and by 13 he had 50 hives, so he was well on the way to a serious beekeeping career.

Although a Fish Creek local, Matt departed later for a working career in Melbourne where he ran a flooring business, effectively attaching epoxy coatings to concrete floors in supermarkets, food, hospital and medical premises.

It was a successful business but after 20 years and running a dozen or so staff, he elected to return to the bush and purchased a 400 acre portion of his family farm that includes about 150 acres of natural Eucalypt forest growth.

"I come from a large family and realized I was not getting back on the land through family succession, so I had to purchase the farm portion I wanted.

The long missed beekeeping experiences have now led to a commercial beekeeping operation.

Matt self-built his steel framed, Colorbond clad and heavily insulated building on the farm.

It measures 24 metres by 12 metres and is completed in great professional detail.

It performs three functions – the first a honey tasting, public visitor and sales area, then the honey extraction room complete with a JBee (from Bendigo) horizontal radial extractor and a warming room, and the final bay for all the complementary gear, including an Avant hydraulic loader, that beekeepers need as a workshop and storage space.

Matt is adamant about customers and public education about bees and honey, pollination and how it all

comes together.

So, he has added as an annex a tutorial room, where he can talk to school and community groups about the role that bees play in the economy, and the importance of pollination, and the variety and purpose of beekeeping equipment.

Two of the shed bays have roller door access and of course there is epoxy coating on the floor of the extracting room for cleanliness purposes.

One of the features of the building is the large 'porthole' viewing window which exposes all the extracting gear to customers and visitors from the adjoining public area.

When Matt built the opening he planned on putting in a large glass pane, but it was too difficult for local glaziers to cut and fit the glass, so he used Perspex and did the job himself!

Interestingly the whole building complex runs off the grid due to a 35kW solar panel array on the roof and battery storage.,

Matt currently runs about 300 hives as a commercial operation.

About half of these go to almond pollination with a stopover on their home journey around Inglewood for rejuvenation on canola, box and other local varieties.

His almond pollination hives for next season are currently on the property being fed sugar syrup in readiness.

His honey producing hives go further into East Gippsland using for example Mallacoota as a base, and also to the Prom for Manuka and Banksia.

Although these can provide low yielding seasons he carefully extracts and brands these honeys as they are the most highly sought after single origin honeys by his customers.

He also provides a quite extensive range of other single origin honeys for tasting and sale, and sells some in bulk to other beekeepers who run market stalls.

Just prior to my visit he had been on a drive up to Omeo and Ensay seeking prospective farmer sites to place hives next season.

Like a number of beekeepers he does not have permanent bee sites, preferring to seek out farmers who see the value in having commercial hives placed on their land.

For hive movements Matt has acquired a mid-sized truck and a trailer both fitted with an Ezyloader,

Although he originally sold honey in bulk to three major packers, he is now finding he can sell all his own



The venue has a focus on educating the public, school and community groups about the honey production process and bees, including about equipment. Matt also rears his own distinctive black Prom type bees and is an annual almond pollination participant. He is fully equipped with a mid-sized truck and trailer both fitted with an Ezyloader for hive transfer and movement.

(Continued on page 27)

Dividing Creek Honey Farm, cont'd

(Continued from page 26)

brand honey to customers who visit his complex – he added “I recognized the importance of the main road to the Prom as a customer source” so he opens his centre at all key holiday season dates and long weekends, and has acquired staff locally to support this objective.

Dividing Creek Honey's name is derived from a spring and creek that forms on the property.

He currently runs around 300 hives and plans to increase the number in equal stages over the next two seasons to get to 500 hives.

He also breeds his own queens based around what he describes as a black bee Prom type.

About The Beekeeping.

Matt bases his beekeeping on the polypropylene Technoset hives which come from Greece and which he has directly imported by the container load.



A feature of the Dividing Creek Honey Farm is the large window between the public visitor and sales area and the extracting section, enabling the details of honey production to be viewed. The passing road is the only main route to the Prom and draws one million vehicle movements by tourists and visitors a year, and is a key factor in attracting customers to the site for branded single origin honey choices.

He says they have unique characteristics including durability, a strong inbuilt insulation factor, and an internal wick system that enables condensation to emit from the hives.

They are also Langstroth ten frame timber hive compatible, hence a single or double Technoset ten frame hive is used as the brood box, with standard timber boxes above as honey supers.

Matt has also travelled the world extensively in search of information on specifics and especially on the varroa mite.

He has been in recent years to Holland, France and Scandinavia, and in October last spent a long period in Greece, including a stay with the founding family of the Technoset company, and also talking

to numerous roadside Greek honey producers (having a wife who has a Greek heritage, and cultural traditions was a great help in translations!)

(Continued on page 28)



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Lindsay Callaway
Warral Maldon Honey

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Dividing Creek Honey Farm, cont'd

(Continued from page 27)

Matt believes the next three to four years are going to be doubly difficult for local beekeepers because of the mite.

He contends that Greece which has long and great beekeeping traditions may well provide some of the answers for the coming varroa mite infestation here.

For instance, Greece has a vital beekeeping industry focused on honey production as there is only a limited and well-structured citrus pollination role.

In short, he says you need to be a very good small scale Grecian beekeeper, or you don't survive.

The country consumes virtually



Principal Matt Petersen is a keen advocate for the ten frame Technoset polypropylene hives that he employs as brood boxes. They are compatible with timber Langstroth boxes that provide the honey supers.

all the honey it produces, and honey prices are cheap around 5 Euro or say \$A8 a kilo retail, but living costs are also inexpensive but rising.

Most beekeepers there earn the equivalent of only a \$A10,000 income per year he notes.

He puts their success down to organics, observations made over a long time, treating with the right materials at the right time, and maintaining strong colonies.

Greece after all has a 45 year history with the mite.

Photos supplied by Matt Petersen

MANN LAKE'S VIDEO OFFERINGS

By John Kennedy

Founded in a suburban garage in the early 1980s Mann Lake has grown to become one of the USA's largest bee product retailers. The company also has a substantial manufacturing base for its own products, and places great emphasis on beekeeper education. In consequence it offers free access to a great range of beekeeping video tutorials including hive management and how-to-do it videos, new product information through to interviews with leading practitioners. The first in the queue of video presentations currently is a 45 minute tutorial on comb honey production. It can be accessed at www.mannlakeltd.com under the beekeeper's buzz heading.

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STOCKISTS OF



Affiliated Club Report to VAA Conference

Melbourne Beekeepers Club



CONTACT DETAILS

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Email: secretary@melbournebeekeepersclub.org.au

Committee: <https://melbournebeekeepersclub.org.au/About>

Post: PO Box 2649 Regent West LPO Preston Vic 3072

The Melbourne Beekeepers Club (MBC) is a registered Victorian incorporated not-for-profit organisation and is an affiliated Club of the Victorian Apiarists Association. The aspirations of the club are to deliver a fellowship of beekeeping support to beekeepers in both urban and rural areas. Centred in Melbourne, the MBC in collaboration with the Sustainability Team at the University of Melbourne (sustainablecampus.unimelb.edu.au/biodiversity) manages demonstration hives at the University campuses of Parkville and Southbank. Club membership is comprised of a diverse and engaged group comprising experienced beekeepers throughout Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America, trainees (individual and families) and adult students beginning their beekeeping journey. The MBC communicates advice on beekeeping, with an emphasis on encouraging best beekeeping practice and biosecurity through a variety of communication formats including:

- Monthly evening and Saturday morning beekeeper meetings either by Zoom or in-person. These include special guests offering novel and new innovations to the practice of beekeeping and its associated activities.

- Delivering beekeeping courses and workshops by Zoom and in-person.

- Providing beekeeping advice and mentoring (in-person and on-line).

- Organising field trips and social events.

- Liaising with and supporting the Victorian Apiarists Association.

Club membership gives you access to all our meetings, events and training, YouTube^{AU} Channel recordings from our Zoom meetings and beekeeping resources.

Because of the incursion of Varroa mite into Australia, the MBC is also focused on assisting our members to prepare and manage the effects of varroa mite on their beehives. This involves

- Communicating advice from Australian authorities about how to best deal with varroa.

- Learning from our international beekeeper members from the USA and New Zealand who have successfully dealt with varroa over many years.

- Conducting in-person meetings to learn from experienced commercial Australian beekeepers about how to deal with varroa.

- Providing an extensive library of YouTube presentations about beekeeping practices, including how to deal with varroa.

- Promoting continuous testing for varroa, including the use of drone frames.

- Demonstrating varroa-relevant practical activities at hives and encouraging re-queening using queens from hygienic lines of bees.

Apricot Cinnamon Cake

Cake

2 cups self-raising flour
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 cup soft brown sugar
1 cup dried apricots, chopped
1 tablespoon of your favourite honey
4 tablespoons milk
2 eggs

Topping

1/2 cup chopped almonds
3 tablespoons honey
30g butter

Method

Sift together the dry ingredients. Rub in the butter until it resembles breadcrumbs. Then add the sugar and the chopped apricots.

Blend honey with milk and beaten eggs. Stir lightly into the dry ingredients.

Pour into a greased and lined 20cm fruit cake tin and bake in a moderate oven for 1 and a half hours.

Cool in tin for a few minutes before turning out onto a cake rack to cool completely.

When cold top with the topping.

Heat all topping ingredients until butter is melted. Then boil 3-5 minutes. Spread over cake.

Affiliated Club Report to VAA Conference



CONTACT DETAILS

Website: <https://mrsg.org.au/beekeeping>

Email: wbfs@mrsg.org.au

Mail: 47 Forest Street, Woodend, VIC, 3442

Meetings: Woodend Neighbourhood House.

47 Forest Street, Woodend, VIC, 3442

3rd Sunday of Every Month (exc. December)

The Woodend Bee Friendly Society (WBFS) has been serving the beekeeping community in the Macedon Ranges for over ten years. We meet every month on the third Sunday from 3:00pm to 4:30pm at the Woodend Neighbourhood House. The WBFS is an Action Group within the Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group (MRSG). MRSG is home to a number of community action groups made up of dedicated individuals working together engaged in projects, events, and practical activities that promote sustainable living in our local communities to make the Macedon Ranges a more sustainable place to live.

The WBFS believes that a strong and inclusive community is important for successful beekeeping, particularly in a region known for its cold and relatively wet climate. We support and encourage beekeepers regardless of the type of hive they adopt for their apiary and regardless of the skill level they bring to the club.

Our monthly meetings are focused on education. We typically cover practical, hand-on advice for the important beekeeping activities in any given month or season. We blend with that education sessions that delve into the science of beekeeping. We also publish a monthly newsletter that circulates to a mailing list of almost 600 people. The newsletter provides additional opportunities to build community and educate our members. Once or twice a year, we also offer a one-day Introduction to Beekeeping Course.

The club has an informal but effective network to assist our local community to manage swarms in the spring and summer.

The Australian Bee Journal welcomes letters and contributions from readers and members.

Please send any letters, articles or photos to abjeditors@yahoo.com

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Editor's Report to VAA Conference

Our first full year of offering both a print journal and digital one, so members have their choice as to what best suits them, has now been completed. Numbers of print copies of the journal rise slightly with each month, so it is reassuring to know that this option is still obviously in demand for many.

The usual problems of obtaining sufficient content for the journal from increasingly time-strapped and busy beekeepers continue. I am very grateful to those who do send in items for the journal. Reports from the Bendigo and Melbourne Section of the VAA are always forthcoming, often with photos, and for these I am very appreciative. Many thanks to John Kennedy for his ongoing and frequent contributions on a wide variety of subjects from all around the world, including right here in Victoria.

Offerings of photos, even a poem or art work, and very occasionally an article about some aspect of beekeeping sometime come in unexpectedly and these are greeted with delight. I really do encourage everyone to consider what they could contribute to the journal, you don't have to be a great writer, or a brilliant photographer to offer something for your fellow beekeepers to enjoy and perhaps learn from. Why not give it a try?

Originally the journal was basically the only means of contact and information for beekeepers spread out around the state and was a vital lifeline informing of what had been happening and what was to happen. Of course in these fast-paced days the journal lags long behind digital communication in terms of getting the word out to the majority of beekeepers. But I do believe there is still a space for the journal to occupy. There are still people who prefer the printed word on the paper page and we should meet that need as long as it exists, if we can. But it is also I think a matter of keeping an historical record, a tangible account of what was that may be needed sometimes, if the computers are off, the power is out, the internet is silenced or maybe that Y2K bug does one day actually happen. Who knows, but why not cover all bases and value our journal and contribute to it if possible.

Please send any contributions to
abjeditors@yahoo.com or
PO Box 42, Newstead, VIC 3462.

*Annette Engstrom,
Editor,
Australian Bee Journal*



Photo: Lindsay Callaway



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Bee Bits From The USA

By John Kennedy

AND NOW AN ELECTRIC SMOKER

A US company Bee & Comb, based in Rock Hill, South Carolina has announced the release of an electric smoker.

It says it is designed to produce safe and cool smoke that can make the beekeeping process quicker and easier than before.

With a retail price of \$US30 the new smoker uses four AA batteries or USB power.

They say with just a flick of the switch the smoker produces a consistent low heat flame that slowly burns the fuel.

The smoker also has an electric blowing system.

Manufactured in stainless steel like a conventional smoker, it appears to have a heavy duty plastic handle that houses the controls and the four battery pack.

It is claimed to be compact and lightweight in its design.

For more information see

www.beekeepingservices.com

US NORTHERN QUEEN INITIATIVE

Work continues at a number of sites in the USA to develop honey bee queens with parasite and viral resistance.

The NQI or Northern Queen Initiative in Michigan is one of these, and it has recently received further grant funding under a local Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program.

The NQI has a number of objectives

- To establish a network of production for selected stock to improve Michigan honey bee mating areas and to develop a sustainable reservoir of selected stocks.
- To provide local or regional access to queen stocks through local pick up for producers, bee clubs and overnight mailing.
- To recruit additional queen producers to amplify project objectives and methods and to improve regional saturation of viable honey bee queen stocks.
- The final objective is to establish Northern Queens producing offspring selected for varroa mite and viral resistance that are able to survive in northern winters and produce seasonally successful honey crops.

The project seeks to address a regional deficiency of using queens and bees that are not adapted to northern conditions.

High scoring VSH (Varroa Sensitive Hygiene) Queens are now available at a reduced rate of \$US20, previously \$30, as a result of the latest grant funding.

There are currently four participating queen breeders with strict rules applying to selection of queens for breeding and they are tested using the Harbo Assay measure along with other grafting criteria.

Further information on the NQI is available from www.sbgmi.org, which is the Sustainable Beekeepers Guild of Michigan.

MORE SUPPORT FOR VETERANS

Service veterans in the USA are strongly encouraged to engage in beekeeping as a therapeutic and meaningful activity upon retirement from the services.

A range of free support opportunities are in place exclusively for veterans to engage in beekeeping or other agricultural programs.

For instance, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides financial, educational, business and training resources through a program that ensures that veterans looking to return home or start a new career on a farm or in a rural community have the tools and opportunities they need to succeed.

A program called Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison (MVAL) connects with agricultural employment, education and entrepreneurship.

It also engages with some 40 grant and technical assistance programs.

There are also paid apprenticeships on offer as well as links to not for profit and Department of Labour work opportunities.

THE WORLD ATLAS OF HONEY

A new hardcover book by C. Maria Marchese is scheduled for release on October 15 this year, with an asking price of \$US35.

Its author, Ms Marchese, is probably the world's leading honey sommelier.

She was recently quoted in The Washington Post as "having such a finely balanced palate that she can taste the beekeeper's fear in a smear of honey".

She is a leading member of the American Honey Tasting Society and runs numerous tutorials and training courses, and also conducts her own Red Bee Honey beekeeping business (www.redbee.com) in the New England area of the USA.

Maria is already the author of three topical and related books including *Honey for Dummies*, *The Honey Connoisseur* and *Honeybee Lessons From An Accidental Beekeeper* all of which have sold well and been well reviewed.

In her new work she has produced a beautifully illustrated global survey of the flavour of honey, with profiles of over 80 countries where it is produced.

Included are the botanical sources of honey and a history from the earliest producers to today.

The publishers note advises "this colourful guide celebrates the exceptional range and diversity of honey, revealing how terroir - the environment in which a food is produced influences honey's qualities, just as it does for wine, olive oil, coffee and chocolate.

"The book also covers the methods used by sommeliers to taste and evaluate honey".

It is well-illustrated with photos and diagrams, and is a heavyweight book of 272 pages from the University of California Press.

As a first edition weighing 1.74 pounds, postage and delivery costs are likely to be substantial.

One for the purists, however with the pre-Christmas release it is worth putting on your gift "wish list" before its 15 October official release. I note that pre-orders can be made via Amazon already.

Judged As One Of The Great Bee Books

By John Kennedy

HONEY FARMING BY ROB MANLEY

A book that is judged as one of the best bee books of the last century is now readily available as a reprint.

Northern Bee Books (www.northernbeebooks.co.uk for more information or to order) has reproduced the great tome entitled *Honey Farming* by Rob Manley in your choice of either a paperback or hard back.

It comprises 306 pages with more than 13 comprehensive chapters where the author addresses everything of relevance to beekeepers.

Manley notes that he enjoyed the last 20 years of his life "during which I have depended entirely for my livelihood on one business only – Honey Farming".

Robert or Bert Orlando Beater Manley (1887-1977) who warrants a three page Wikipedia account, was an English farmer who became a beekeeper in his youth, and in 1948 he became the first person in Britain to manage 1000 hives!

He is credited with breeding Italian bees as a con-

temporary of Brother Adam, with Manley being a leader in commercial honey farming methods.

He is credited with developing the Manley moveable frame system (his frames had solid side bars) and especially for feeding sugar syrup to his bees to get them through a British winter!

He also developed the Thymol method of using thymol in syrup intended for winter feeding to prevent fermentation and the growth of mould.

Later Manley's Thymol method was proven useful in controlling varroa mites,

This book first emerged in 1946, and the current offer was released apparently to coincide with World Bee day, it is described by the publisher as "a great bee book". Although somewhat dated, now 70 years on, with little reference to the varroa mite, it still addresses all the basics.

The publisher has also produced a 10 minute video tribute to Manley, available on their website and worth watching.

MATED QUEEN BEE ORDERS

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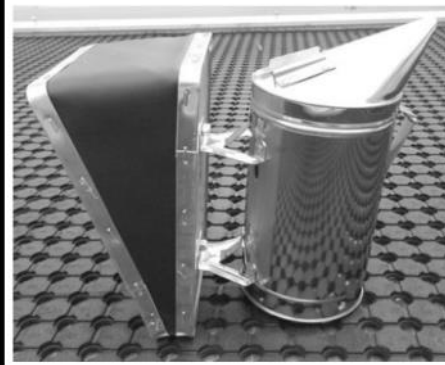
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Email honeybee.biosecurity@agriculture.vic.gov.au
The Varroa project team can also be contacted at the above email.

For enquiries related to permits and movement restrictions:
Email honeybee.permits@agriculture.vic.gov.au
For beekeeper registration please log onto BeeMAX
www.bees.agriculture.vic.gov.au
or call the Bee Registration Helpline 1800 356 761

Current Apiary Officers

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Karyn Di Florio
Bee Biosecurity Officer
Email: honeybee.biosecurity@agriculture.vic.gov.au

If you can't reach an Officer and need to talk to someone urgently, please call the Customer Service Centre: Ph: 136 186

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP):

BAIRNSDALE:
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BALLARAT:
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Jacki Hayward 03 5527 0444

HORSHAM:
Jess Dickerson 0437 913 538
MILDURA:
Dan Cadmore 03 5051 4349
SEYMOUR:
Kathryn Hamono 03 5735 4300
WODONGA:
Lloyd Beaty 02 6043 7936

Other contacts

Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC):
CEO: Danny Le Feuvre
Mob: 0402 467 780
AHBIC@Honeybee.org.au
PO Box 42, Jamison Centre,
Macquarie ACT 2614
www.honeybee.org.au

Crop Pollination Association
Stephen Targett,
Ph 0428 649 321

Honey Bee Research & Development committee (HBRDC)
Annie Stoddart
Program Coordinator Research
02 69236918
Annie.stoddart@agrifutures.com.au

VFF State Beekeeping Branch:
Secretary: Gail Rochelmeyer
Mob: 0408 592 091

Collingwood Childrens' Farm Apiary Open 10.30-3.30
2nd & 4th Sunday of month.
collingwoodbees@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/collingwoodbees

The Australian Bee Journal welcomes contributions from beekeepers and others for inclusion in the journal. Please send your original bee and honey related photos, articles, handy hints, anecdotes, club activities etc to abjeditors@yahoo.com

Photo: Geoff Jackson



Contacts

VAA Inc Regional Groups

Bendigo Branch:

Secretary: Peta Dawe
bbvaasecretary@gmail.com
 Chair: Jamie Trimby
bbvaachair@gmail.com
 Treasurer: Carol Maunder
bbvaatreasurer@gmail.com
 General Information Q&A
 Meetings - 1st Wed. each month
 (except Jan & Dec)
 Dinner at 6.00pm (optional)
 Meeting at 7.00 pm.
 Lakeside Hotel, Bendigo.
 Executive Committee Meeting:
 3rd Wed month as required.
 Venue: As notified.
 Please register to attend all
 Meetings

Melbourne Section:

Secretary, Rob Kerr
 Ph: 0421 078 387
Vaamelbournesection@hotmail.com
www.vicbeekeepers.com.au/Melbourne-Section
 Information/ Education Meetings:
 from 7:30 pm the last Thursday
 of each month except December
 Location: Church of Christ,
 1 The Avenue, Surry Hills.

Sunraysia Branch:

Trevor Monson,
 Ph: 03 5024 8674.
monsonshoney@bigpond.com

VAA Inc. Library Trust

Secretary: Russell Goodman,
 Ph 03 9735 3836

Affiliated Organisations

Central Victorian Apiarists' Association Inc (CVAA Inc.):

Millie Enbom-Goad
 Ph: 0400 083 582
cvaa_inc@outlook.com

Gippsland Apiarists' Association Inc. (GAA Inc.):

President: Stan Glowacki:
jeeralangapiary@bigpond.com
 0413 136 878
 Secretary: Neil Barraclough:
neilbarra2@outlook.com
 0429 888 706
 Treasurer: Sean Paul Smith:
kaledprime@gmail.com
 0466 041 199

North Eastern Apiarists' Association Inc. (NEAA Inc.):

Secretary: Moss McCallum
secretary.neaa@gmail.com

"J" Beekeeping Club Inc.

35 Duncan's Lane, Diggers Rest
 Meet on the 2nd Wednesday each
 month at 7pm

Southside Beekeepers Club:

Secretary: Ted Cottle
 Ph: 0428 429 547
ted@southsidebeekeepers.com.au
 7.30pm on the 4th Wed each
 month at Monterey Secondary
 College,
 21 Silvertop St, Frankston North

Geelong Beekeepers Club

Pres: Stephen Fridey
 Ph: 0401 897 579
info@geelongbeekeepersclub.org.au
 Meetings third Friday of the
 month at Belmont Masonic
 Centre,
 25 Regent Street, Belmont

Latrobe Valley

Beekeepers Assoc.

President: Sean-Paul Smith
LatrobeValleyBees@gmail.com
 Meets 7-9pm first Tuesday each
 month, Old Moe Netball Courts,
 99 Savages Rd. Moe
 P.O. Box 323 Newborough 3825
 Mob: 0466 041 199

Woodend Bee-Friendly Society

An action group of the Macedon
 Ranges Sustainability Group
 E: wbfbs@mrsq.org.au

South Gippsland Beekeepers

Inc. Secretary: Anna Jones
 Mob: 0411 770 062
secretary@sgbeekeepers.org.au
 Web: <http://www.southgippslandbeekeepers.org.au/>
 Meetings: second Thursday of
 the month at St Peters Anglican
 Church Hall, Cnr McCartin St. &
 Bruce St., Leongatha

Melbourne Beekeepers Club Inc:

Web: melbournebeekeepersclub.org.au
 E: secretary@melbournebeekeepersclub.org.au

Northwestern Bee Club Inc.

President: Roger Mitchell
 Mob. 0407 427 431
northwesternbeeclub@gmail.com
 Web: <https://www.nwbee.club/>

Mornington Peninsula

Beekeepers Association :

P.O. Box 186, Mornington, 3931
 Ph: 0401 965 558
 E: admin@mpba.org.au
 Monthly MPBA Club Meeting -
 4th Wednesday of every month
 at 7pm Mornington Park Pavilion,
 9 Flinders Drive, Mornington

Moonee Valley Beekeepers Club Inc. (MVBC Inc.)

Secretary: Paul Kucera
mvbeekeepersclub@gmail.com
 Meets at 7pm every 2nd Tuesday
 of the month at Maribyrnong Park
 Bowls Club, 195 Holmes Rd,
 Moonee Ponds, VIC 3039

WerriBeeks Inc.

President: Carmel Gerdson
 Secretary: Helen Morland
 Treasurer: Debbie Conway
 E: werribeeks@gmail.com



John van Weeghel

Do you have photos of bee or honey related subjects?
 The Australian Bee Journal would love some of your photos for
 use in the journal and on the VAA website.

Please send to abjeditors@yahoo.com

CLASSIFIEDS

HONEY BUYERS

Archibald's Honey Co.
Spring Rd. Dingley, VIC,
3172 Ph: 03 9551 1860
Contact: Stuart Archibald
Email: rosalie@archibaldhoney.com.au

Beechworth Honey Ltd.
38-40 Hammersley Rd.
Corowa, NSW 2646
Ph: 02 6033 2322
Contact: Steve or Jodie
Goldsworthy

Beeman Honey & Beekeeping Supplies
2/14-16 Tova Dr.
Carrum Downs Vic 3201
Ph: 0438 7465 01
Contact Moe Jarrad
majarrad@gmail.com
Beemanhoney.com.au

Capilano Honey Ltd
Capilano St.
Maryborough, VIC 3465
Ph: 07 3712 8224
0419 431 652
Contact: Stephen Covey

Goode's Honey
Lot 1, 75 Bosworth Rd
Bairnsdale, VIC 3875
Ph: 03 5152 2180
Contact: Terry Goode

Honey Buyers Group
Martin Drake,
Bendigo or Melbourne
0409 808 332

Redpath's Beekeeping Supplies
193 Como Parade East,
Parkdale, VIC 3195
Ph: 03 9587 5950
Alan Redpath
redpaths@redpaths.com.au
www.redpaths.com.au

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**The deadline for the
July 2024
Australian
Bee Journal
is 10pm on
Mon. 1st of July**

**The Australian Bee Journal welcomes
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